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P O E M S,

ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

BY

SIR JOHN HAMMER, BART.

"I pray you mar none of my verses with reading them ill-favouredly."
As You Like It.

LONDON:

1836.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Friar and the Ass	1
Death of the Venetian Jew	20
Alexowitz	22
Proteus	24
Diana	49
Asmodeus Redivivus	52
Thrasimene	61
Lines	63
The Cardinal	64
Messenger of Syphax	66
Lines	69
Pesara	70
Approach to Venice on a November day	71
Fragments	80
Ditto	81
Pine of Herzgovitz	82
To a Cock of the Woods, in a Poulterer's Shop, London	84

THE
“FRIAR AND THE ASS.”

The story is founded on an old Italian novel, called “Novella di Gianni Andato al Bosco, a far legno.”

Io dirò cosa incredibile e vera.—DANTE.

GENTLY his banks where classic Mincio laves,
Worn with the strife of Guarda’s stormy waves;
And hills by poets loved, and many a town
Unfading beauty blend with old renown,
And still thine empire keep, oh, Italy,
Which was, and is, and evermore shall be,
There dwelt, tradition thus preserves the tale,
A simple peasant in a quiet vale.

He knew but one condition from his birth,
To toil, sole guerdon of the sons of earth ;
And tilled his scanty fields with little care,
Want stood aloof, though plenty came not there ;
Yet still for holytides he kept a hoard
To mark the day, and grace his frugal board,
For of the saints, and tales of saintly lore,
Great was his love, and growing still his store.

Hard by his home an ancient wood o'erspread
The vale, divided by a river's bed,
That through its depths with melancholy tone
Swept on, by curling mists at evening shewn,
Grateful its shade, when summer's noontide glare
Blent wave and mountain with the dazzling air,
When his white robes had winter stern arrayed,
Its shelter warm, and grateful still its shade,
There with his ass of much-enduring mood,
Faggots he cut, and logs for fuel hewed ;
And cheered poor Sancho with a hearty thwack,
When he heaped up the billets on his back,
Yet still his path along the outskirts kept,
Or open dingles, where the sunbeams slept,

Nor ever had he wandered farther in
Through the thick brakes that looked as black as sin,
He feared each long and sombre avenue,
The haunt of goblin grim, or loup garou,
For all around was nothing to be seen
But thick set branches, clothed in dismal green,
Nor birds were there, but ravens dark and rooks,
And moping owls in solitary nooks,
Nor beasts, save wandering hogs, that sought for
 mast,
And oft he crossed himself if they came past,
For into swine he knew that devils once were cast.

It chanced one morning as to work he hied,
A distant tower unseen before he spied ;
For the wild winter's wind a gap had made,
And heavy snows on brittle pines that laid,
And a new vista to the sight displayed.

At first he paused, and thought of goblin tricks,
But plucked up courage at the crucifix
That glittered clearly in the frosty air,
And showed the house of holy men was there ;

Then with adventurous spirit brave and bold,
He sung three aves, and his beads he told,
And set forth towards this new discovery,
But tied his trusty ass beneath a tree.

Just then two friars came slowly up the road
With sturdy backs, that bowed beneath their load,
For mendicants they were, who all around,
Begged alms, with good St. Francis' girdle bound,
And fitting was it, so they preached and said,
That all the neighbourhood should give them bread,
Who for the sins of all, so sore their saint bestead ;
So round they went, and took their tithe in kind,
Sure proof of godliness, and willing mind ;
And still by all 'twas ready to be paid,
Whate'er they asked, by matron and by maid ;
For them poor Chanticleer forsook his post,
His cheerful voice, the village clock, was lost ;
But 'twas no matter, for the convent tower
Far o'er the hills, could still proclaim the hour ;
For them the earliest salads of the year,
And ripest fruits the peasant strove to rear,

And maize from off the terraced mountain's brow,
And sweetest cheeses from his only cow ;
And they with holy words repaid the gift,
And absolution gave, and pious shrift,
And built up many a chapel for their saint
By the road side, lest zeal and grace should faint,
Which oft they visited in long array,
As circling months brought round a solemn day.

Of these good brethren the quicker one
Espied the ass, his name was Friar John ;
For gibes and jests, in convent walls renowned,
Abroad the readiest at invention found,
Short scraps of prayers he knew, and half the creed,
And stoutly chanted, though he ne'er could read ;
But most he shone in 'suasive eloquence,
And thus appeased the Prior for light offence ;
No geese or poultry could his suit resist,
Their owners gave them, or they soon were missed ;
And loss and murrain, sure they justly bought,
Who gave not alms, or grudged St. Francis aught,
“ Gramercy,” quoth he, “ but our shoulders' load
On that pack-saddle were as well bestowed ;

'Tis a plain sin to slight the saint's decree
Who sent the ass, and tied him to the tree,
Patient his servants' due approach to wait,
Then drive him burthened to the convent gate ;
But first put on this halter round my head,
I'll remain here a little in his stead."

His fellow stared, and wondered what came next,
So new the sermon, though so old the text,
And loitered, "Hence," again he cried, "begone,
I too shall follow with to-morrow's sun ;
But tell the Prior a fever in the plain
O'ertook me toiling for the convent's gain,
And the good peasant, in whose house I rest
Bad thee go on, and answer for his guest,
And gave, lest like again should come to pass,
And holy men o'er-laboured be, his ass,
So may he be remembered in the mass."

Back came the woodman, and the monk was gone,
So was his ass, but there was Friar John,
Erect with saintly garb, and shaven brow,
In the same place, where he the beast but now
Had left, and tethered to the self same bough ;

Backward he started with a chilling fear,
And thought some spirit of the wood was near !
Scarce could he stammer, Benedicite,
His tongue seemed shrivelled, and his sense to flee,
His trembling fingers strove to sign the cross,
But strove in vain, and wandered at a loss ;
What still at starlit dawn, or twilight grey
He feared to meet with, on his lonely way ;
What by his fire, when nights were drear and cold
He heard, long howling on the wint'ry wold ;
That viewless presence, which the awful shade
Of the dim forest to his thought conveyed,
And every tree that murmured o'er his head
Its cadence, seemed to summon from the dead.
There stood the very fiend before his sight,—
Tall, dark, and silent in the fading light,
And froze his veins, and palsied c'en his flight :
Then thus the Friar : — “ Cease your fear, my
son,
Nor tremble holy things to look upon ;
No ghost or goblin can this garb assume,
Nor restless spirit, from unsainted tomb,

Of flesh and blood am I, though just restored
To my old shape, for which be Heaven adored !
And you, who quiver there, were long my lord :
Behold the fruits of pride and gluttony,
And shun them both, or fear to follow me ;
For I all this, who sinfully forgot,
To a vile ass was changed ;—and 'twas my lot,
As well thou knowest,—many a blow to bear !
How hard my burdens, and what scanty fare,
As once, of all our house, the only one,
Dainties profane, my heart was set upon,
Nor vigils kept, nor fasts, but only tried,
With outward show, the rotten core to hide,
Down to a beast, I fell, but still prevailed
My guardian spirit, for so sharply hailed
Oft on my back that stick, which well I know,
So shrewd its summons, and so sharp its blow ;
So coarse my thistles, and so galled my skin,
My legs so weary, and my sides so thin,
That the blest company of saints above,
Who wore this girdle, for St. Francis' love,
Joint intercession made, my sentence to remove.

“ Again I come, once more a man on earth
Absolved from sin, of grace though little worth ;
And my long days of degradation seem
Like the dim shadows of a troublous dream,
That daylight strives to banish, yet remain
In memory fixed, and dog the weary brain :
And still this halter seems as 'twere a link
To drag me o'er the precipice's brink.
Untie me, then, for Christian charity,
And once, my master, set thy servant free !
Then a poor pilgrim, at our founder's shrine,
Refuge I'll seek, and bless the powers divine !
Henceforth may peaceful days, and holy thoughts be
mine.”

Long stood the peasant in a corner pent,
And heard the words, scarce knowing what they meant ;
And then, with trembling hand, untied the rope,
And beating heart, that hardly dared to hope,
Till by degrees composed, and re-assured,
He 'gan to think of all his ass endured ;
"Twere long to tell the apologies he made,—
What saints invoked, or to what martyrs prayed ;

Or how besought the Friar, at least to deign
With him that night in shelter to remain ;
And pass we, too, the frugal cottage feast,
How round the fire, each feared to grow a beast,
His wife and daughter, and his grandsire old,
That wond'rous story when their guest had told,
How restless memory raked up every sin,
And conscience pricked their simple souls within ;
And he in turns awoke, and soothed their dread ;
But to the cheer looked most, and hugely fed,
Till came the hour of rest with sudden pace,
And for repose each sought their destined place.
But oft in bed with sleepless eyes they turned,
And looked where yet the embers dimly burned,
And thrilled to hear the watch-dog's lazy howl,
And shrunk in terror from the whooping owl ;
For darkness thus to wonder lent her aid,
And filled with awe the superstitious shade ;
Discordant thoughts their fevered fancies bring,
The ass of Balaam, and the Assyrian king.
At last to dreams confused their terrors glide,
And kind oblivion comes, that dreary train to hide.

But now the night was past, the dappled dawn
Stole o'er the woods, and streaked with light the lawn.
At the pale moon, the mastiff ceas'd to bay ;
The clamorous rooks went wheeling on their way ;
Flown from their perch the cocks crew loud and shrill ;
The dew shone brightly, and the wind was chill ;
Already sought the Monk his convent-door,
But left his dreaming hosts an hour before.
Strange was his tale, and wild the mystery,
Long o'er their hearts its shadows dark shall be,
And the grey convent, with its portal tall,
And sombre towers, and solitary wall,
And the faint echo of its pealing choir
Heard through the gate, shall solemn fear inspire ;
For there, thus busy rumour through the dale
Plies wondering peasants with her ghostly tale ;
For there he daily pours his orisons
Who once was man, and beast of burden once ;
There prays that saintly father in his cell,
Saint though he was, to Satan's jaws who fell !
Oh ! there in sooth is Sancho hid beside,
To a low pillar, by the chapel, tied,

Hard by a quaint old alabaster pile
Throws its long shadows o'er the lonely aisle ;
And he who sleeps beneath it with his sword,
Once of these towers was hailed the feudal lord ;
And great the largess to the church he gave
On death-bed laid, his sinful soul to save !
Now, by his tomb, long rest of all its brass,
One monk, at midnight, chants a sleepy mass ;
But who the knight, for whom he prays repose,
Scant is his care, perchance the Prior knows,
Or tomes can tell, their statutes that enclose.
There Sancho waits, within the cloistered court,
And crops its weeds, of fate foredoomed the sport !
Hard fate, yet harder than the marble stones,
On which he rolls and turns his weary bones !

FRESH blow the breezes from the blue Tyrol,
Down many a grassy slope and flowery knoll,
And bright green vineyards, which the fisher sees
In Guarda's mirror twined with mulberry-trees,
When down from Riva's mountain-shadowed shore,
Or Scarca's streams he plies with sail or oar.

Fresh blow the breezes, with untiring wing,
From Alp to plain, and all their voices bring,
From the drear regions of storm-drifted snow,
And gloomy forests, murmuring far below,
From the deep valley, which the sturdy steer
Ploughs with slow step, or where the muleteer
By craggy paths descending, hails the vine
Promise of rest, and cheers his patient line,
The cloud born torrent's wild and ceaseless swell,
The wood's long whisper, and the tinkling bell
Far up among those solitudes, the note
Of roaming heifer, or of browsing goat,
The hunter's challenge, or the herdsman's horn
From crag to crag by bounding echo born,
Or sullen accents of some castle clock
That warns the warder on embattled rock ;
With mingling sounds float far the heavens through,
Where faint the old, the wild wind gathers new,
And now it eddies round a little town
Girt with green hills, and streamlets gushing down
From cleft and gully in the mountains high,
In rock strewn channels swiftly racing by,

And in the midst there stands a market-place,
No pompous building, yet Italian grace
To simple forms, for use alone designed,
Attracts the eye, and pleases every mind.

'Twas this that reared for shelter and for shade
The lengthening vista of that cool arcade,
And carved above the windows fair to see
With scroll-wreathed arch, and crowning Fleur-de-lis ;

'Twas this that fount its classic air that gave
And scooped the marble for the sparkling wave,
And where the ample vase its jet receives
The margin twined with lotus-imaged leaves ;
No sculptured figures deck yon modest gate,
Nor laureate lines imperial guests relate,
Nor yet that word ¹ by faction still profaned
In cities proud, though better there maintained ;
Gigantic blocks its rough hewn front compose,
With quiet grandeur meeting friends or foes,
Open without a sentinel it stands
And a long line of level road commands.

¹ *Libertas.*

And now along that poplar shaded way
Come young and old, and rich and poor to-day,
For this the morrow of St. Julian's fair
When hither make the neighbourhood repair ;
Glad time by wandering minstrel gaily sought,
For present joy, and food for future thought ;
By many a maid anticipated long,
Then shall she join the revel and the song ;
By thrifty burghers reckoned oft and well,
Then pence may turn, and crowns to ducats swell.
Together mixed they throng from every side,
Pour through the streets, and fill the market wide,
There gathering groups contentious struggles wage
To hear the Merry-Andrew on his stage,
There lowing cattle their green pastures mourn,
Unconscious victims, never to return ;
And by that pillar stands a crop-eared ass,
And with sonorous jaws salutes the crowd who pass.
The silk-worm spinning on his mulberry tree,
Feasts on the leaves, in roses hums the bee ;
The bright bird flutters in the summer fruit,
And trills glad carols, till the winds are mute,

As if they listed to a spirit nigh
Of sunshine born, some Ariel of the sky ;
But the plain peasant who his profit sees
In silken produce from his wasted trees,
And reared those flowers to tempt the honey bees ;
Who rests attentive in the evening air,
Nor stirs one step the wild bird's song to scare,
Well with that minstrel pleased his grapes to share ;
Sometimes but scantily gives, and grudges sore
The daily drone, still begging at his door,
And lest through this dissent and heresy
Should come to pass, as wont too oft to be,
And one bad sheep should poison all the plains,
Strict is the law St. Francis' rule ordains.
And fair without the convent needs must show,
And in poor guise its humble brethren go,
For men might think their tale a lazy farce
Who begging went with panniers, and an ass.
Thus Sancho came rejected to the fair,
Long his old master stood, and eyed him there,
And listened to his voice, and scanned him o'er,
And wondered, doubted, little, less, no more,

Then in a sudden passion thus he stormed,
“ Oh, sordid wretch, a second time transformed,
Whom saints nor angels have from sin released,
Nor thy dark foretaste with thy fellow beasts,
Nor fasts nor vigils in yon holy fane,
Nor vows nor warning ever made in vain ;
Who in thy cell so well hast used the time,
As now to bear a second load of crime,
From that vile purgatory scarcely free,
Sure ’tis thy fate that sends thee here to me,
And this same stick that served thee well of old,
Again must bring thee back to speech and human
mould.

Nay, never shake thy head, nor yet deny,
The devil fails thee in so foul a lie,
Nor look with sidelong eyes, and backward ears,
For every kick thou shalt repay with tears.”

By this, around them grew the jeering crowd,
For strange their gestures, and their converse loud ;
The affrighted ass, who all this lecture heard,
Still shook his head, nor understood a word;

The woodman stamped, and Sancho 'gan to bray,
He clutched his staff, but first was forced to pay ;
Then having bought his own, he led him home,
And gave him earnest of the time to come ;
And oft, and sore the shrinking beast must feel
How sharply fall thy blows, oh, soul compelling zeal.

The time to come, alas, a little time !
No more the ass can into man sublime ;
Vain as Medea's smoky crucible
Old Pelias' limbs to nerve, the cudgel fell,
As the fond wishes of that sister train
Who stood around, the peasant's hopes were vain,
Broken and poor, in pale October's sun,
He looked already as his race were run,
And still he knew nor respite nor repose,
His weal to work, redoubled were his blows ;
But when November came with cloudy blast,
One icy morn his master stood aghast,
For there lay Sancho 'neath his roofless shed,
Frozen, and stark, and famished, stiff and dead.

And he must mourn for ever, for the soul
Of sinful friar, past his mortal goal
In beastly form, by holy Church unshriven,
Outcast of earth, unchanged and unforgiven !
The friar in convent hidden safely bides,
And hapless Sancho's fate with subtle smile derides.

DEATH OF THE VENETIAN JEW.

ON the sands of the Lido, when wild waves are rolling
'Gainst the lone beach, and the thunder-bell tolling¹,
Deep through the midnight from yonder proud city,
That the heavens may have mercy on those who've no pity;

Oh, bury the outcast, the proud Christian spurneth
To rest with the Jew, when to dust he returneth ;
With those of my nation my weary bones cover,
But far, far from Venice, my spirit shall hover.

From the land where our masters no longer can task us,
I shall watch the grey olive-tree wave o'er Damascus ;

¹ The bells of Catholic churches on the continent are always tolled during a thunder storm :—

“ And storm-bell tolling to beguile
The cloud-born thunder passing near.”

CAMPBELL.

From the peaks of high Lebanon, sacred and hoary,
I shall look o'er my country, and think of its glory.

Ye hate us, proud nobles, perchance we repay ye,
When we walk in your palaces masters, how say ye?
Then in vain ye may spell o'er each Visigoth letter
In your old titles, the usurer's better.

And when o'er your islands again grows the willow,
And the mud of their ruins shall stain the white bellow,
The race ye have trampled, once more like the cedar,
Shall flourish in glory, with heaven to lead her.

ALEXOWITZ.

Thus said the young Alexowitz, by Danube's sweeping
side,

A hundred chiefs their vassals rule, in pomp and power,
and pride;

While I, whose lordly sires bore sway, o'er wide
Croatia's ban,

Now stand within their roofless halls a lone and land-
less man.

But think not I am come to mourn o'er hopes that flew
away,

Like morning stars at dawning bright, but vanished with
the day,

I come but on their threshold to whet my father's sword,
If fiefs and friends are mine no more, of that I still am
lord:

I come to twine old memories with the hope of future
days,

And link the phantom of their fame, with that which I
will raise ;

And if my cloak is scanty, and the winter wind is cold,
I'll think of how it howls in thee, my lost ancestral hold.

The Baron rides in coat of mail, the Churchman robed
in fur,

And this must watch through vigils pale, and that the
war-horse spur ;

And what have they that I have not ? high place and
proud degree,

As high as their's, nor all forgot, once more my name
may be.

I'll rear it by the banks of Rhine, in joyous Allemayne,
I'll rear it in thy gorgeous court, oh double-sceptred Spain ;
For like the wind that wanders where it lists, a voice
within,

Cries come with me, as bold as free, nor doubt while
others win.

PROTEUS.

It is necessary for the explanation of many passages in the following poem, to say that it was begun, and a considerable part of it written in Italy, during the eventful winter of 1830—31.

“ You have learned, like Sir Proteus, to wreath your arms like
a malcontent.”

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

Of all the gods whom superstition's sway
From clime to clime hath made the world obey,
That cunning ruler, in whose teeming shrine
Each human passion found a power divine,
A heavenly patron, from the immortal sphere,
To shield and guard its lowlier follower here ;
Though passed their rites, and dwindled to a tale
The names that awed each old Ionian vale ;
Yet still shall one, of all mankind pursued,
Their changeful passions as of old delude ;
Yet still shall Proteus his old shapes assume,

And cheat that world, *which reason's rays illume.*

Now drest as freedom, bid the nations rise,

Now start Napoleon to their humbled eyes;

Then change again, and as they dash away

That brazen idol with the feet of clay,

Another still they find, and still shall he,

Whate'er his mask, their cunning mocker be.

So like the changes of their various will,

Some thought that reason was but Proteus still,

As erst the god, so sings the Mantuan sire,

Now seemed a faggot—now a flame of fire;

So now he fill'd that intellectual blaze

That flashes glory on these later days,

And bids us, nobly daring, to despise

Whate'er our fathers counted to be wise.

They err, from far mysterious reason shines

With meaning fraught, which many a seer divines,

And cries Eureka, till a cloud between

With envious shade reverses all the scene;

'Tis he, 'tis Proteus, from her presence dread

To vex the dreams of gazing nations sped,

No more he watches by the ebbing sea,
Though fair and false, inconstant still as he,
No more he drives across the mountain's brow
His ¹ ancient herds, far others serve him now,
But still strange portents on his coming wait,
When reason bids him blind her slaves elate,
She brings mankind's illusion to the pitch,
'Tis his to lead, and whelm them in the ditch ;
Thus when pale arbitress of wits and tides,
O'er heaven the moon in fullest radiance rides,
Then elves and fays, her airy tribes arrayed
In shapes fantastic, flutter o'er the glade,
And cheat the wandering clown, and lated village maid.
Thus she commands, and well obeys the sprite
The 'hests imperious of her mystic might :
From Gaul's green vineyards, from the Polish plains,
Now calls the many to cast off their chains,
Now helps some prophet, whom they think the true,
By force or fraud to forge them all anew.

¹ Terruit gentes grave ne rediret
Sæculum Pyrrhæ, nova monstra questæ
Oinne cum Proteus pecus egit altos
Visere montes.

Once for religion blood obscured the sun,
But now the wise are liberal, or for none ;
Alike run mad for this, or t'other cause,
As Proteus changes rush the world to wars.

What, though the peasant, doomed afar to roam,
Weep his burnt field, and desecrated home ;
The ruined merchant mourn his useless store,
Locked up by strife, with famine at the door ;
The silent palace, with its nobles fled,
The herbless earth, the black and smouldering shed,
The extinguished hearth, by rapine lonely made,
Despair, suspicion of itself afraid,
That sits a cloud in childhood's thoughtful eye,
And watches ever, lest a foot be nigh,
And every form of death, and every woe
That fate can bring, or frenzy can bestow,
Oh what are these to philesophic mind,
To rule the world, and reconstruct designed ?
Light in that lofty reasoner's scale are they,
“ To-morrow's sun will smile them all away,”
But with that morrow, still another storm,
To some of ruin tells, and some, reform.

Hard, then, their fate whom evil fame pursues,
As tyrants branded by the partial Muse ;
That as the historian writes the reader sways,
And Borgia whelms with Machiavelli's praise.
He laid deep plots for conquest, and to keep
That he had won, and lull his foes to sleep,
From which, perchance, they woke not ; death might
wait,

Disguised as welcome, smiling at his gate,
And gathering hosts for him might trample o'er
The prostrate city—drench the earth with gore ;
Yet let the eagle bear the palm away
From baser vultures, and the prating jay ;
To strife if empire's Roman game allure,
Vain-glorious sophist, are thy hands more pure ?

The world would gaze on reason face to face,
Then burns like Semele in Jove's embrace : *
And still as years emerge from their abyss
Shows many a Paris, 'gainst Persepolis :
Patriot, or tyrant come, in judgment stand ;
This loves persuasion, loftier this command,
The sword's their last appeal, and ever near at hand.

And well may one in Tuscan vales reclined,
To thoughts like these direct a willing mind.
Here from each land where late my steps have trod,
Which slept as yet, nor dreamt it felt the rod,
New tidings, still the same, while rumour brings
And shakes o'er thrones her venom-dropping wings ;
While the gay city of the Seine displays
Her last new trophies of the “immortal days ;”
And guarded well with citizens’ bright blades,
Her fresh-reared banner greets the barricades,
While some remodel, some support the state,
And this would act, and that deliberate ;
And by the stern dark column of The Man¹,
His scars of Wagram shows the veteran ;
And gazes upward, with a kindling eye,
As if Napoleon’s spirit from the sky,
A moment hovered o'er the pedestal
Whence once his image, not his memory, fell,
While booms the cannon through thy squares, Bruxelles,
And Diebitsch leaves unreached the Dardanelles,
To front by Warsaw’s serried wall afar,

¹ In the Place Vendome.

Storms that may veil his fame's ascending star ;
Light of the world, whose love to thee is more
Than all Olympus ever knew before,
Thy kindred gods, who left their power to thee,
Oblivion quaffing of their deity
In Æthiop's cavern, deep beneath the sea ;
Light of the world and leader ! still appear
As there thy strife, its dinted footsteps here,
As there the war, the agony, the grief,
Here the same traces, but with time's relief.

The sharp wind whistles from Livorno's quays
O'er thee, oh lone and melancholy Pise,
And sweeps in mockery with its pinions grey
Round the proud relics of thine earlier day,
And by the Duomo, and the spot where those
Of ancient time in sacred earth repose¹ ;
And where thy tower, of generations gone
Wonder or boast, unriven, yet leans on ;
Perchance, some solitary stranger views
That group all-glorious with congenial muse ;

¹ The Campo Santo.

The careless peasant drives his camels past,
And hastes to shelter from the biting blast,
He turns not, he, to dream of time and tide,
Of fallen grandeur, and of vanished pride,
Yet revolutions his own days have seen,
And hailed by turns, a puppet and a queen,
Till Florence' Duke regained his forest evergreen¹.

To Rome, where yet round prelacy's proud sun
Roll clouds of purple, though his race be run,
Here and hereafter of each subject state
The unmerring lord, did Proteus penetrate?
Changeless, to whom by saints above 'tis given
To rule the earth, and hold the keys of heaven.
Yet see the sprite usurp St. Peter's throne,
And mock mankind from Tyber or the Rhone.
Contending factions hover o'er the scene,—
This holds with Guelf, and that with Ghibelline,
And the red ordeal of the sword must try
The cause of priests' infallibility.

¹ A favourite hunting seat of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany, near the sea, and about three miles from Pisa; the camels are bred there.

By arts, and creed, and language, and descent
Joined, had these joined them, in one kingdom blent,
Not split in states, that each might fret their hour
Of rival grandeur, and fast fleeting power,
How had that fair land proudly laughed to scorn
The northern eagle, and the barbarous horn ;
From Rome afar, in Po's opposing wave,
Then had black Bourbon found an earlier grave,
Nor then had triumph on the Valois' crest
Sat like a hawk, capricious and carest.
Oh ! short-lived triumph, that from Alp to sea
Spread, to be lost in fair Parthenope.
To her charmed prey, lo, gentle Circe sings,
And war's fierce vulture smooths his ruffled wings,
Sweet sound her accents, blending with the falls
Of plashing fountains, in their marble halls,
And ease by day, and luxury by night,
And smiles and revels warriors rude invite.
But soft siestas lull'd by summer's breeze,
That woke in whispers o'er the sparkling seas,
And silken rest, and dreams of perils past,
May soothe security too sure to last.

Did then Italia rouse her from her trance,
Bid her brave sons for freedom couch the lance,
And spurn the invaders from her soil, no more
Stained with the strife that sheds but kindred gore ?
No ! she was plotting in her nobles' halls,
Or feasting at luxurious carnivals,
Or claiming empire for her papal throne
O'er distant lands, yet plundered of her own.
The haughty Spaniard chases back the Gaul,
To either bends she still, a ready thrall :
A foreign standard flouts her plundered shore,
A foreign leader calls her sons to war ;
For foreign gold, their blood her princes spill,
For foreign rulers blooms the vine-clad hill.
Yet cease, vain minstrel, thy desponding strain,
Who cares, if dollars come from France or Spain ?
When bounds the war-horse at the break of day,
And rings the fortress with his startling neigh,
And eager troops are pouring through the gate,
Sing thy wise songs of ruin and of fate.
Soon shalt thou mark the thunder, and the flames,
Hear the glad shouts—St. Denys ! and St. James !

When mingling legions wave their banners high,
First stay the whirlwind, sweeping through the sky ;
Yet, if at evening, when the city's sacked,
Thou meet'st with one who hath his plunder lacked,
Perchance he'll turn to thee a readier ear,
And left by fortune peaceful ditties hear.
Oh, ne'er shall wisdom's lesson half be told,
Or nations learn it, though the world grows old ;
Though Greece saw her dissensions fall before
A foreign conqueror, on her blood-stained shore,
And spurned the Persian, but to fall at last,
A single province of a realm as vast,
While her old spirit fleeted fast away,
Still more degraded with the coming day ;
Nor Athens blushed her fetters to assume,
The gilded vassal of imperial Rome,
The theatre where learned fools might prate,
But ne'er bethink them of the high debate
That nerved her ancient heroes, and held back
The Macedonian phalanx in its track ;
Though sunk her conqueror, doomed herself to feel
Stern retribution's sure avenging steel ;

The new Prometheus, whose immortal frame,
Fed the fierce vulture of the north, though flame,
And sword, and slaughter, heralded the march
Of other victors, 'neath each wondering arch,
That saw the unchained barbarian hurl to dust,
Each god's high temple, and each hero's bust ;
Though shone her gorgeous daughter, but to fall,
And rise no more, ¹ within her broken wall.
But first each depth of folly's maze to seek,
And baser render yet the name of Greek ;
Still, still, shall fade at bigot faction's rage,
Unheard Cassandra's evanescent page,
“ Divide and conquer,” discord reads alone,
And sows the dragon's teeth, and casts the stone.
But she to whom such lesson had been dear,
Thine, thine, oh, Proteus ! did she rather hear.
Alas ! Ausonia, as the bigot priest
Marked his torn victims, for a while released,
That on each rack-numbed limb, and mangled thew,
Returning sense might double pangs renew ;

¹ The breach by which the Turks entered Constantinople has never been repaired.

Of yore, did science, with her vestal train,
Build but for this thy shrine of peace again,
Drunk with her gifts, that soon thy brain should reel,
And the wild Thyrus deeper urge the steel?
But thy hot sun did passions quick inspire,
And maddened all thy children's hearts of fire.
Who but must smile when revolution's strains
Scare the fat tilth of yonder Flemish plains.
Who but must smile—if smiles, indeed, could be
At thy great name perverted—Liberty,
When the slow Belgian joins the frantic dance,
And waves the wreath with Bacchanalian France.
So the dull ooze, that late in ditches slept,
Wakes into wrath, with Danube's waters swept;
So the thick cloud that hung o'er hills supine,
Aroused, replies when rattling thunders join ;
And let them still, alike they speed away,
And morning breaks with bright and freshened ray,
Glad with its beams, nor shrinking from the gloom,
Meet we what face may fickle fate assume ;
Awhile afar and wandering, let me turn,
By war unclouded, where the sun may burn,
And decks with flowers this land's sepulchral urn.

And ye who shrink repugnant from the strife,
The restless winds that plough the seas of life,
And seek but peace, wherein to shape your way
To future mansions of eternal day,
Lo, Vallombrosa rears her grey retreat,
Her solemn walls for contemplation meet;
Her smooth mown lawns, where studious feet may roam,
And pore at ease o'er many a classic tome;
Above, around, in long fantastic line,
Sweeps with his woods the monarch Apennine.
And glad the sights the musing friar sees,
The far smoke rising mid the chestnut trees,
The sparkling ether o'er the distant plain,
Blue as the bosom of the summer main ;
The milk-white ox, slow winding up the steep,
The laughing peasant, and his vintage heap,
Till lengthening shadows of the westward sun,
Spread their veil round him as the day glides on ;
Then may his steps, untired with the scene,
Seek the trim garden's cypress-covered screen,
And trace at leisure on the virgin page,
The virtuous precept, or example sage :

Or fates of kingdoms, which of yore befell ;
'Twas thus grew many a famous chronicle,
With silver clasps, and gilded letters quaint,
The pictured lives of martyr, or of saint,
Or gests of valorous knight, his arms who bore
To smite the Turk, on Jordan's sacred shore ;
Perchance with terror riding on his spear,
Flew as the eagle's his unchecked career.
Perchance left singly, scorning yet to yield,
He sunk to rest beneath his broken shield ;
Then turned his comrades, maddening at the thought,
And dear the trophy from the field they brought.
High in some old cathedral's gothic aisle
In storied pomp his monument they pile,
Around his tomb the priest may masses sing,
Where banners wave, and odorous censers swing,
And the stained oriel sheds its colours bright,
In uncouth tracery telling of the fight. .
But ages roll, and soon before their blast
Must all we see be mingled with the past ;
No more that roof its pinnacles shall raise,
A few grey stones, a tale of other days,

That tells of splendour, ere the foeman came,
And smote its shrines, and gave its towers to flame,
And bade destruction in one ruin whelm
The shepherd's rude-carved crook, the warrior's helm ;
A few green walls shall rise its site along ;
Where now the tomb that should his fame prolong ?
Yet shall he live, and still each high emprise
Shall fire the wanderer 'neath those eastern skies ;
Though gone their sculptured record, and defaced
The marble pillars of that blackened waste,
Still as the monk's recital opes to view,
Dressed in old phrase, his memory wakes anew,
Each wreath of victory won on field or flood,
By lonely mountain, or enchanted wood,
The oppressor slain, the damsels' fetters rent,
And pagan caitiffs down to Hades sent ;
Nor scorn the themes which Ariosto sung,
And ancient Chaucer Woodstock's oaks among,
And hence reflected to our later day,
In Scott's wild page, and Dryden's classic lay.
Yet may he love through evening's silent hours
To woo the Muses from Athenian bowers,

Or problem's deep beneath the stars to trace,

Mysterious lore of Afric's swarthy race.

By sacred signs sent down from sire to son,

Where Thebes' wide gates saw ancient Nilus run

Past mirrored temples, through that mighty clime,

The nurse of realms who've yielded since to time ;

The awful fount, whence young Achaia drew

Her lore, and fledged her eagle ere it flew ;

And shook, while hovered o'er her callow wings

The ancestral grandeur of a thousand kings.

Long time sequestered in the cloistered cell,

War's maddening demons bade such science dwell ;

Slow crept the pilot yet, nor dared to brave

The hidden terrors of the pathless wave ;

Enough for him his timid course to shape,

From creek to creek, and jutting cape to cape,

And wait with sails in sheltering haven furled,

When the breeze freshened or the billows curled.

But earth has shaken off her widow weeds ;

And led by peace, a bolder age succeeds.

Lo, El Dorado opes her countless store—

Can fancy image, avarice pant for more ?

Hark to the beach, how varied nations throng,
Waked by the clang of fame's resounding gong ;
Wild with desire, their hearts responsive leap ;
Hence, cavaliers, your home is o'er the deep !
Each thirsty lance that longs for battle's din,
Each squire that burns his knightly spurs to win,
Each moon-struck bard, of golden realms that feigns,
Here is the clime where Artemisia reigns.
Each sage with schemes of true perfection warm,
Here last was seen Utopia's fleeting form,
Haste, for the gates of darkness are unbarred,
And show beyond a dusky vision, starred
With wealth and peace, too soon to fade before
Assembled legions on her plundered shore.
Swift as the winds they spurn the Atlantic main,
And fast before night's gloomy shadows wane,
And bright in morning radiance to the old
Spreads the new world her dower of thrones and gold.
No more shall victor shun the billow's roar,
And halt his legions on the curtailed shore,
To shed, or gather, as his bosom swells,
Tears with young Ammon, with the Roman¹ shells.

¹ Caligula.

That clime which his and Bacchus' rule confess,
Must bend before her sister of the west ;
And waves and whirlwinds, now a vanished fear,
But serve to waft him to that glorious sphere.

Sequestered shades, religion's sacred seat,
Ye cloisters worn by dedicated feet,
Cells for long years the anchorite's abode,
To penance vowed, to solitude, to God,
Here may the world's tired children rest at length,
And mourn no longer for their wasted strength ;
Youth's fading dreams, ambition's weary game,
And 'vantage lost, and visionary fame !
But say, on every brother doth descend
That sainted peace, that owns but heaven its end !
Hope for the future in the realms above,
Goodwill on earth, and unaspiring love !
Far other thoughts, to yonder lonely boy,
Each sunrise brings, night's wakeful hours employ,
The last, and meanest of the convent train,
By birth a peasant, none in heart or brain ;
His soaring fancy grasps the days to come,
Thy chair, St. Peter, and the might of Rome !

The savage swine his ruder brothers tend
In the deep woods, when autumn's dews descend,
Nor heed the book-learned child, too weak to toil,
Whom the monks shelter, and who trims their oil.
Oh, still unquiet spirits love to range
The world with thee, thou subtle lord of change,
Alike they strive for princedom, and for power,
Pent in a cell, or throned in palace tower ;
Various their means, one common end they sought
When the priest plotted, and the warrior fought ;
What need of sword and slaughter, when the bell,
And torch, and curse, and book, will serve as
well,
And easy souls persuade they're sent to hell ?

But hail ! thou last Avatar of the god !
Light of the people, and of thrones the rod ;
For fickle Proteus loves not all too long
To hear his votaries sing one single song.
Priests are but men, this Luther found long since,
But now the crowd abjure both priest and prince.
Their's now the right, the ancient plan's reversed,
The first are hindmost, and the last are first.

Kings but for show—the Church a whitened wall,
And old ancestral wisdom worst of all.

So says the press, that diapason voice
That speaks for all, and rules the rulers' choice.
How laughs sly Proteus, as his lordly slaves
Rise to the call, as to the wind the waves ;
And talk of rights, and late awakened man,
And nature's equal, universal plan.
Once to their legiance faith could subjects bind,
But darkness then deluded all mankind.
Sure 'twas a cheat that bade them rear a throne,
And in their monarch's greatness see their own ;
Haste now your truth, and loyalty transfer,
For reason reigns and her quick minister ;
Nor longer for forgotten notions strive,
Swim with the stream, sirs, if ye'd live and thrive.
If these put Bayard's gallant lance in rest,
And Guesclin's banner bore before the rest,
Then let them reap such labour's just reward,
But small the profit, though the blows were hard.
That fame which wit or folly may assume,
And minstrel's lay, and alabaster tomb,

Can this short draught the thirst of myriads slake,
Content to follow in their fathers' wake ?
No, sure that voice hath spoke diviner things
Which saith, " Come down, the many shall be kings !
Strike in brave nations, thrones no longer bear,
Or rear them but their sovereignty to share."

High o'er the tumult reason casts her ray,
And smiles the doubts of prejudice away.
Thus on the Alps the summer's sun dissolves
The marks of bears, and wintry tracks of wolves ;
Fools now may trace the historian's warning page,
And bigots prate of consecrating age.
And fades the present, all too fleet and fast
For man to waste it lingering o'er the past.
His march shall giant intellect restrain,
Bowed down and fettered by a rusty chain ?
No, to congenial shades let ignorance fly,
Nor waxen wings to Dedalus deny ;
And be this written on your father's grave—
" Who holds with you is idiot or knave."

Yet there's some difference in this new sect,
Not all alike the great of old reject ;
Fired with their worth they pierce earth's sacred gloom,
And hail their very ashes in the tomb.

Did then no spirit watch above the dead¹,
No guardian angel brood o'er Hampden's head,
No funeral pomp, or solemn stillness there
Shield the short sleep of death's immortal heir ?
No ; the frail form that mighty soul forsook,
Mouldering to dust again the sun must brook,
While to the world flies the recording pen,
To tell how heroes rot like common men.

Where late he ruled, to greet the Stuart's eyes
'Twas hate called Cromwell's blackened head to rise,
And love sad Inez², thus thy tale is told,
Mocked thy pale brow with diadem of gold ;
To saints embalmed, the Roman zealot bends ;
'Tis superstition working priestcraft's ends.

¹ I allude to the exhumation of Hampden, in order to complete his biography, so that no information concerning so great a man might be wanting to the public !

² Inez de Castro.

Yet may such passions, as the spring-tide, sweep
O'er bounds which struggling nature fain would keep.
To us 'twas left, and these enlightened days
Stern death to eye, with coldly curious gaze,
And tear the cerecloth that the world may know
How his dark wierd the avenger works below,
Oh, still triumphant, whatsoe'er the scene
See Proteus flit the vaulted aisles between,
Skilled ever wrong to gloss, and right disguise,
And hide the truth from our obsequious eyes ;
'Twas he that led those fame-adorers here,
And lit the blinking torch, while Reason broke the bier.

Yet wonder not, they to themselves are just,
Ashes to ashes still, and dust to dust.
As once the old philosophers did find
This world to form congenial atoms joined,
And self-impelled, to their appointed place,
Like sought for like, the noble and the base ;
Thus still, shall reason's ignis fatuus ray
Corruption seek, and flicker round decay,
And laugh at prating fools whom she has led astray !

Hark ! as she speaks from out her sacred shades,
While the wide heaven her mounting light invades,
How Europe stands expectant, and aghast,
And reads wild changes in the murmuring blast,
While her quick priests, the heralds of her reign,
Prepare her way, and raise her votive strain.
Thus, when o'er Lapland's dark and wintry year,
The Aurora comes, and lightens all the sphere,
Bids the long night before her radiance fly,
And sounds unwonted rattle through the sky,
Trembling, those signs the fisher marks afar,
And owns the voice of Odin or of Thor,
Who to his children calls, and prophesies of war.

DIANA.

" Why, then, you may leave a casement of the great chamber window open, and the moon may shine in at the casement."

Midsummer Night's Dream.

WHERE thy fane, time-riven,
Crowns the marble hill,
And sailing up the heaven,
Thy crescent decks it still ;
Though the Asian timbrel,
And the bounding foot,
And song, and Lesbian cymbal,
That hailed thee once, be mute ;

A stranger of old days dreaming,

Alone at midnight hour,

When mystic stars are gleaming,

Diana hails thy power.

What though the mighty mother

Of all the gods denied

To thee the gift another

Had, and in virgin pride

Bade thee spurn the myrtle,

Chaste, and cold, and true,

(Oh, in his nest the turtle

Wreaths cypress branches too)¹.

Yet the shining river,

And the waving tree,

Fresh and fair for ever,

Oh, gave she not to thee ?

Still amid the wild wood

Let thy horn rebound,

As in dreaming childhood

I've heard its silver sound,

¹ Ah ! why

With cypress branches hast thou wreathed thy bowers ?

Don Juan.

Stealing far and faintly,
O'er wakened wold and wave,
While echo answered quaintly,
From out her star-lit cave.

ASMODEUS REDIVIVUS.

"Credite me vobis folium recitare Sibyllæ."

WHAT, shall nought e'er be sacred, nought evade
The prying imp that pierces every shade,
That new Asmodeus, to whose subtle sight
Walls turn transparent—doors let through the light?
From north to south, from Paris to Whitehall,
He still must know it, let what will befall.
To rule the world, what unborn measures wait,
Hid in cabals of fashion or of state;
Whose will was wrong, whose wife has gone astray,
Who wrote the last new novel, or the play,

Or who should tremble did he but disclose
What late—but silence, for the realm's repose.
And thus with hint, and menace, and surmise,
And bold assertion round the circle flies ;
And holds patrician follies out to view,
Till burn the many, eager to pursue,
And snatch the garb, and think 'twill fit them too.
Time was, e'er yet this universal rage
And thirst for knowledge lit the kindling age ;
When ways were rough, and with the waning light,
The careful driver put up for the night,
Nor reached his goal, thus antient legends say,
Till twice he'd worshipped on the seventh day.
Thus now, with many a rest and pause between,
Winds his slow way, the Italian vetturin ;
Thus now, alas ! provoking many an oath,
The German schelm smokes on, and rivals both.
Then honest Marvel, once a quarter, down
To country voters sent the news from town,
And e'en quick rumour waited patient yet
For confirmation in next month's Gazette.
Now see thine honours, proud Olympia fail,
Not Phœbus' self could grapple with the mail.

Far flies the dust, the rapid road recedes,
Glow the hot wheels, and foam the panting steeds,
Levell'd alike the valley and the ridge,
And wondering Menai flows beneath his bridge ;
And still as mountain, strait, and vale are crossed,
Expecting myriads cry, " the post, the post!"
Each light-heeled Mercury owns the warning note,
Throws down his cards, and buttons up his coat ;
And hastes with news each longing door to greet,
From bank to market, and from street to street ;
The shaggy pony hears the accustomed sound,
And pricks its ears, and neighing paws the ground,
And back with willing amble turns to bear
To hall or house the universal care.

Unconscious beast! the hay-rick's baser meed
Nerves all thy strength, and quickens all thy speed,
Thy frolic fellows, or thy whynnyng foal,
And the long, glad, reiterated roll.

Oh, couldst thou know what hopes and fears de-
pend

On that blest instant, when thy task shall end ;
How at thy charge's magic spell shall glow,
Each varying passion, each emotion flow;

Well might'st thou deem thou serv'dst the sacred nine,
And all the pride of Pegasus be thine.
But see, fair science wider spreads her beam,
McAdam's self must sighing yield to steam,
And flying Fame shall time and space devour,
Born on the wings of "forty miles an hour."
Now fright with war each northern isle and bay,
Where Pentland rolls round stormy Ronaldsay ;
Now, of the barn ere yet the blaze be spent,
Bid Connaught rise and nobly follow Kent.
Almighty press! without thy fostering hand
Nor states, nor statesmen, now must dare to stand ;
Traitors to thee, see priest-rid Charles o'erthrown,
And William dispossessed of half his own.
Ruled by thy dictates, creatures of thy sway,
The implicit world must wonder and obey.
Alike thy power, o'er least and greatest things,
Now puffs a novel, now deposes kings.
Thus lolls some eastern potentate at ease,
In high kiosk, that woos the mountain breeze,
Around him pages, minstrels, hangmen, wait,
And dancing girls, and ministers of state ;

And now to this a careless look he turns,
Some pasha's bowstrung, or some city burns ;
Now puffs his pipe, and nods on t'other side,
Through their gay maze voluptuous Almes glide,
And smiles, or gory heads, or feasts, or sighs,
Wait the least glance of those despotic eyes.

Where now his head shall hapless Curio hide,
Where find a refuge, through the world so wide ?
Quick from the wrath impending, let him haste
To Syria's suns, or lone Australia's waste :—
What Curio ! wherefore ? not ten hours ago,
'Twas who but he ! then whence this sudden blow ?
Is the Bank broken, that the man's proscribed,
Found out a rogue, conspirator, or bribed ?
None of all these—what was it ? quickly tell ;
Then you've not read this morning's article.
'Tis thought the Commons must impeach, if not,
They'll swear that all are black with the same blot,
Senates and ministers denounce alike,
And all at once with deadly vengeance strike.
Yet things like these are not quite new, you'll say,
E'en old Sir Robert kept such troops in pay ;

And fought with flying Posts, and Gazetteers,
True Briton, Courants, more than twenty years ;
And though such rats may seem scarce worth the banning,
They've clawed at wits, from Bolingbroke to Canning.
Yes, here our sires read politics—confest :
But we've high life and low life—all the rest.
How Julia holds Lord Henry's heart in thrall,
How sprung dire discord from his Grace's ball,
And mobs and courts, and fights, and blushing brides,
And city feasts, and Lord knows what besides.
Far from the town, where late she reign'd supreme,
A hapless maid with tears augments the stream,
The woodland stream, that careless murmurs on,
Nor heeds the sorrows of so sad a swan ;
Light breathe the zephyrs round its fringing tree,
Where bells the buck, and hums the roving bee,
And the sweet sky above so calm and clear,
And earth around in summer's brightest cheer,
And birds that sing by starts from out the brake,
And fishes leap along the silver lake,
And song of mowers in the new-cut hay,
And glad bells faintly sounding far away,

And green leaves blending down the varied glade,
Might wake to rapture—not this hapless maid.
Alas ! what spleen her tortur'd breast invades ?
Like Myrrha pent within the cruel shades.
For her, ye Dryads, all your sports give o'er,
E'en that sad nymph could never hate ye more,
Nor Daphne now, a laurel's form that rears,
Nor Po's pale virgins with their amber tears,
Nor sad Clorinda, with her lover's dart
Fix'd in that green stem, once, Ah yet, her heart,
Could e'er to bard impart such thoughts of woe,
'Mid the green woods, as Delia's breast must know.
Then, blest Court Journal, as in knightly day,
Some fair forsaken pin'd her life away,
Swift flew her moments, number'd as she sunk,
Pale grew the leech, and inward smiled the monk,
And thought—God speed St. Francis and his shrine,
Her towers and manors are already mine ;
Till from far shores her ransomed lover came,
And woke to bliss the just-expiring dame ;
Thus can thy pages' magic mirror chase
Clouds from her heart, and dulness from her face,

Each long-loved scene to fancy's eye restore,
And change to London's streets the willowed shore.
See Summer's lion crouches in his lair,
And mellow Autumn waves his golden hair,
Still noon burns fierce, but evening gathers grey,
And red the leaf upon the beechen spray,
And morning frosts with pearls bedeck the mead,
When careful grooms first try the hunter's speed.
From glaring pavement, and from dusty street,
Fly the gay throng, September's joys to greet,
And lone Penates of the town must mourn
For six long months ere their loved lords return.
But shall his Grace in dull oblivion pine,
Till his great name grows cobwebbed as his wine ?
Or captive hearts forget bright beauty's queen,
Lost and unhonoured in the sylvan scene ?
No, Fame's quick minion heard his mistress call :
Nor more he hovers o'er the park or ball ;
No more to operas he attends the fair,
Or wanders round deserted Grosvenor-square ;
He seeks the shades, but onward as he flew,
He met Silenus and his merry crew,

Satyrs and Fauns, that cheered the chase along,
And Dryads, trilling sweet their woodland song :
Then thus the spirit—

——Hold, good bard, I pray,
I hear the horn—'twill do another day,
This song of yours, and what the spirit said,
The post comes in, and news is to be read,
So hush your lyre, and take the chaplet from your head.

Milan, Dec. 1, 1830.

THRASIMENE.

How bright the peaceful sun upon the lake,
How rich the plain, with corn, and wine, and oil,
That with scared echoes heard the war-cry wake,
When fell Rome's lion in the Moorish toil ;
Scarce knows the peasant of that battle day,
Save that it fell in ages far away.

Yet though no Carthaginian now await,
With legions swift, and terrible, and strong,
And elephants, whose force might break the gate
Of high Cortona ; boast not, lest ere long
Your visions of security be fled,
And captive you by Doganieri led.

Vile caitiffs, who in wait for travellers lie,
And make them have recourse to magic spell
That lurks in dollars, from their searching eye
To hide, at Rome, what might not do to tell
Had passed the frontier of that sacred land,
That feels St. Peter's keys, like burning brand.

THE leaf that scarce had burst its bud
Where Hartz' wild mountains rise,
Nor waved in beauty till the flood
Of ancient Elbe had met my eyes,
Now hangs all withered on the spray,
By Vallombrosa's cloister grey ;
And mellow autumn once again
Hath tinted hill, and wood, and plain,
From old Ravenna's gloomy pine,
To the chestnut covered Apennine.

Oct. 27th.

THE CARDINAL.

ONWARD thou sweepest, haughty cardinal,
Pomp in thy train, dominion in thine eye,
As if thou dreamedst Rome imperial
Still ruled the world, as in the days gone by ;
Onward thou sweepest, and the crowd adore
Thy footsteps, and thy blessings still implore.

Doth, as a prisoned eagle's, chafe thy spirit
In secret, 'neath that bearing calm and high,
When he sees the wide heaven he should inherit,
And his clipt wings, to soar that vain would try ?
Or art thou soothed with purple majesty,
The shadow, though the substance may not be ?

E'en as upon the great first Cæsar's throne,
With orb and diadem Augustulus
Sat, trembling when from northern Elbe or Rhone
Came sounds of Gothic warriors, to us
Dost thou seem, successor of those who trod
On nations, who now teach thee how they're shod.

Yet, oh ! think not so scornfully, but rather
Say, Rome is likest Julius, in her fall,
When dying in the capitol, the father
Of empire caught his mantle for a pall,
Shrouding himself with robes of royal state,
That fitly the world's lord might sink to fate.

Rome, Nov. 1.

WRITTEN

After seeing the picture, by F. Solimeme,

OF THE

MESSENGER OF SYPHAX CONVEYING POISON
TO SOPHONISBA.

LADY, 'twas for a king but now
You decked that proud and regal brow,
And sat a conqueror to wait,
Amid these gauds of idle state,
But purple clouds of closing day
At night's rough coming fade away,
And whelmed alike are flower and tree
When quail the rocks before the sea.
Scarce shall the bark outlive the gale
With rudder lost and shivered sail,
And gilded prow must find a grave
With broken hull beneath the wave.

With glistening eye and beating heart
You watched our chivalry depart,
Yet 'twas not woman's fear that bid
The tear-drop gem that silken lid,
Or woke that snowy bosom's bound
Like Arab steed's at trumpet sound,
But the high spirit of your race
That flashed like lightning o'er your face,
And deemed the passing ranks of war
But presage of the victor's car.
For where the arm' would quail in fight,
When love and glory both unite?
Who bide the onset, urged along
By woman's smile, and minstrel's song?

Lady, awake, the dream is past,
Of that proud host, the first, the last,
That thou shalt look upon, is here
With vanished crest and broken spear.
Demandst thou why? thy lord, through me,
From battle field thus pledges thee:—
There dwells within this cup of gold
A surer fence than castled hold;

He bids thee drink, and sleep to wake,
Where foes thy rest shall never break ;
He bids thee drink, to meet again
Afar from yon ensanguined plain.
Beneath the hills has sunk the sun,
Drink, lady, drink, my task is done.
When first I bore for thee this token,
The opal morn had scarcely broken,
And ghastly relics of the fray
In silence round about me lay,
Ere dew the sands again hath drenched,
Whose mid-day thirst their life-blood quenched,
Another, brighter shall have come
To share their everlasting home ;
A home where thy proud sires shall greet,
The queen who death would rather meet,
Than stain her far descended name
With captive's tears and captive's shame.

LINES.

THE owl he loves the ivy tod, the dove the myrtle tree,—
Which bird hath the better taste? come tell, my muse
to me.

With ivy Bacchus wreathes his brows, and merrily
shouts he,

But Venus blessed the myrtle boughs, as she rose from
out the sea;

'Tis gladsome in the festive hall when goblets flow
with wine,

When hearts are brimming o'er with love, the joy is
more divine;

Ha, ha!—for me the maddening wreath shall wild
Bacchante twine,

But let her mix some myrtle buds, and then it shall
be mine.

PESCARA.

HASTE ! mother, haste ! smoke blackens the blue sky,
Pescara comes, oh, whither shall we fly ?
I see his band beyond those olive trees,
I hear his trumpets braying in the breeze ;
There are none here beside but you and I—
Haste ! mother, haste ! oh, whither shall we fly !

Fear not, my daughter, 'tis our land to save
From foreign tyrants, that his banners wave ;
To chase the French, that o'er our counties ride,
And sweep their lilies from our river's side :
They'll harm you not, and once you loved a lance,
And the gay greeting of a soldier's glance.

Yes, but that lance ne'er rode in Spanish ranks,
'Tis all alike, while o'er our valley pranks
Frenchman or Spaniard, and our native lords
Whet for a stranger's vassalage their swords.
I'll to the mountain, for he watches there,
Let these avengers follow, if they dare.

APPROACH TO VENICE ON A NOVEMBER DAY.

CLEAR shines the sun, but yet the cloud is grey,
And the fresh breeze comes scented with the spray
Of the wild billow, that, with thundering fall,
Broke its huge mass 'gainst Malamocco's wall ;
Then bad its rider, ever fierce and free,
To Winter bear the homage of the sea.

On Styria's peaks his gathering storms repose,
And shroud the giant on his couch of snows,
Ere yet descending through the howling air
He bends the pine, and strips the poplar bare,
Ere the tall cypress, 'mid the naked scene,
'Gainst the white tower shall rise with deeper green,
And the broad oxen, from the swelling Po,
To their warm stalls, and sheltering village go ;
While houseless beggars in the biting cold
Sit numbed to sleep, and dream of feasts and gold.

By empty villas and by mouldering vines
Gleams the pale ray, that warms not though it shines ;
Yet these but late their clustering grapes have shed,
To glad the living,—those are of the dead :
These still shall wake with Nature wakening,
And tint the landscape with the hues of spring.
They come no more, no more shall beauty's hand
Strike the soft harp, in halls Palladio plann'd,
No more, last refuge of despairing pride,
Luxurious pomp a people's fall shall hide.
But vaulted roofs with hollow sound reply,
When Brenta's breezes sweep careering by,
And bear the leaves in gathering heaps to rest
At gates which hailed a monarch once their guest ¹,
Alike the eagle's wide-spread lineage bind
The hosts he sought, the realm he left behind;
And for the subjects of his sires, o'er them
The sword must hang, to guard the diadem
That crowns another, vanished race and fame,
Fit guest of Venice now, the Valois' name.

¹ Henry of Valois, king of Poland, who spent some time at Venice, on his way to assume the crown of France, in 1574.

I saw a pilgrim on a jutting stone
High on the Alps, which, ages long agone,
The thoughtful traveller from Lombardy
Has marked when mountain shadows gather nigh,
And they who come up on the other side
Alike its marble ridges have descried,
And spring to welcome what with fond regret
They leave, who mid-way in the path have met—
Exile he seemed, as one whom hard eyed fate
Had shut, stern pertress, from his palace gate,
And bad the spider, unmolested there
Weave the grey web, that none should turn to
tear ;

But an old Jew, with contemplative smile
Watch the congenial insect's cunning wile,
Smile in those stately halls that this should be,
Where once he cringed, no lowlier knave than he,
In the long pageant of departed years,
Pomp, power, ambition, all that life endears
To the bond-servants of its gilded chain,
The proud, the great, the glorious, and the vain.
There had he come betimes, and waited long,
With hate untired, as rivers ever strong,

But humble guise, as if his life had been
Made but to serve the lordly Nazarene,
And there with staff and garb of sable hue,
Oft had he sat when gayer souls withdrew,
And fed on bitter thoughts that use had nursed,
Till second nature had become the first ;
And there till Lido's waste, and briny wave
Shall mark him still an outcast, and his grave
In the dead grass and barren sand be made,
Where shrine is none, nor prayer was ever prayed,
Save of his worn and stern and weary race,
Above their last, and desolate dwelling place ;
Still shall he sit, as seasons glide away,
O'er the proud pile, contemptuous of decay,
And his vile count of usance mutter o'er,
A serpent coiling on the untrodden floor,
Last of the living links, that men may see
'Twixt what was there, and what remains to be ;
Ere from the lonely rooms and shattered wall
Rent by his hand the very frescoes fall,
And sordid ruin, with a drear repose,
Broods o'er that scene of long-forgotten woes,
Whose name so glorious once, the peasant scarcely knows.

Yet once he knew it, or his fathers knew,
 When Genoa's banner at Chiozza flew¹,
 In joy of triumph or extreme of ill,
 Honoured and loved, and sought, and trusted still;
 And deem not fancy wayward, that she wrought
 Thus for that stranger with creative thought
 A lofty race and heritage, and stood
 Dreaming such dreams, by Brenta's falling flood.
 From his yet sleeping form, and forehead pale,
 Spoke the high air, that want could ne'er assail,
 And through the gloomy shadows of distress
 Yet broader beamed the lights of nobleness ;
 There dimly stretched his native plains, before
 Rose misty peaks, with forests covered o'er,
 And scanty terraces on mountains high,
 And thin spread hamlets, and a colder sky ;

¹ En effet tout était à Venise dans une profonde consternation, et dans une agitation extrême. C'était au milieu de la nuit qu'on y avait appris la perte de Chiozza, par le retour de quelques braves qui avaient inutilement essayé de s'y jeter. Le tocsin de S. Marc avait appelé soudain toute la population aux armes. Les citoyens de tous les rangs avaient confusément passé la reste de cette nuit sur les places publiques, s'attendant d'un moment à l'antre à voir l'ennemi attaquer une capitale où rien n'était organisé pour le repousser. Le jour parut, et l'on vit au haut des tours de Chiozza flotter l'étendard de Saint George au dessus du pavillon de S. Marc renversé.— *Durn, Histoire de Venise.*

And he to German cities, far away
Fared wearily, or farther still than they,
And this of his own Italy, had been his latest day.
I gazed until it seemed my wandering thought
His sleeping vision's self-illusion caught ;
And then we stood together, in the pile
Which he had left, a short—a bitter while :
Nor yet the glories of his ancient race,
Torn from their old hereditary place,
Had left cold shadows on the naked walls
To chase each other through deserted halls.
Thoughts of his youth, they came there back again,
And his heart drank them, as the earth the rain.
There was that true and strange epitome
Of human life, and all that man can be,
Where to the present's ever-changing moods
Speaks the old past, with fixed similitudes ;
And calls up memory, with wisest lore,
To scan their deeds who filled the world before¹.

¹ " And when a sage's bust arrests thee, there
Pause, and his features with his thoughts compare."

There Titian's hand a warrior Doge portrayed,
And there some idler of the summer shade ;
There bent a maiden, with a glad surprise
O'er gems, but foil to pleasure's beaming eyes ;
And there her merchant sire, who trafficked far
With wary thrift, to Balkh, or Istakhar ;
Her with bright tresses Giorgione drew,
As when love saw, and kindled at the view,
And bore her fame of beauty far away,
Past Este's towers, and Montefeltro's sway ;
Him Tintoretto's rapid hand designed,
And fixed each passing thought that floated in his mind.
The subtle priest that watched the late accord
Of conclave's votes, and started up their lord,
And bad avaunt dissembled age and pain,
And grasped the crozier, like a charger's rein ;
The smooth-tongued envoy, ready still to lie,
Sharp as his sword and cold, with piercing eye,
And they who raised, and they who threw away
Fortune and fame, with folly's vain display,
Alike in that wild trance were imaged there ;
But they are past, and know no earthly care :

And all of their old splendour that remains
Surrounds their dust, in time-defying fanes,
The porphyry pillar, and the sable stone,
Sure test of gold—that 'twere of virtues known ;
And marble monuments, and faint perfume
Of burning censers, and the gorgeous gloom
That broods in silence, o'er each sacred place,
As present were the angel of their race,—
These vanish not, though all beside is fled ;
But their last son must know another bed
In life and death, and lay in humbler guise his head.
Oh visions bright, of unforgotten hours,
Bright, and yet wan, as grief's declining flowers,
Wherewith o'er sepulchres she wreathes her head,
And calls, how vainly! on the lost and dead !
Thus did my fancy fill that pilgrim's brain
With ye, and feign the airy past again,
And call up phantoms of ancestral fame,
And power, and love, and give them all a name,
Allbeit fleeting, as Autumnal gleams.
Ye wild waves dashing 'gainst the low-mouthed
streams,

That pour their floods far over the lagoons
With turbid tide, in winter's watery moons ;
Ye winds that wailing through the city go,
And fill no sails, and bear no banner now,
But waft the sea's corroding salt, to fade
Some glorious fresco, in its lone arcade ;
Ye tapering towers, far scattered, whence the bell
Sounds through the air, with melancholy swell ;
Ye shades, companions of the breeze, that float
With a strange power, o'er isle, and quay, and boat,
Now distant, and now nearer, and suffuse
The landscape ever with chameleon hues ;
So let me look on ye, and dream once more,
And summon back the tales, and songs of yore
From Arquàs' poet vale, to Venice' farthest shore.

F R A G M E N T S.

A RUINED VENETIAN SPEAKING OF HIS
PICTURES.

— they were
The gods of my idolatry ; — 'twas heaven,
When silence reigned in the noon-heated air
That sparkled o'er the quiet city, even
As a lone statue in a Theban cave
Shut from the world without, and the dull throng
Of fools, or those hard spoilers who have riven
Them all away, to hear the rippling wave
Beneath the lattice, with its summer song,
And gaze upon the forms that Titian drew,
And the deep dells that wild Salvator knew ;

And bid again the inspiration wake
That woke their being, for the gazer's sake :
There Venus her Adonis did pursue,
And I pursued intent, with glittering eyes,
The fancies that sweet vision bad arise ;
But there he lay upon the blood-stained dew
Of the unharboured boar sad sacrifice—
Oh, soul-delighting tales of Grecian story
There were ye all ;—and by whom torn away ? ! !
The concentrated sheen of all your glory
Ne'er pierc'd their dull hearts with one single ray——

* * * * *

THE beech let faithful Hobbima portray
With branching arms, and bark of silver grey,
And the tall spire at airy distance seen
O'er Flemish meads, their tapering stems between,
But Cuyp shall paint the waters' oozy bride,
The willow pale, by marshy meadow's side,
And dappled herds beneath the shade reclined,
And wild geese high above, far streaming down the wind ;

The tawny oakwoods in their summer glow,
See Rubens gird with heaven's unfailing bow,
Light o'er their shaggy foreheads seems to sail
The shade, companion of the showery gale,
And peasants hurry round the loaded wain,
To house the haycocks ere the coming rain.

* * * * *

PINE OF HERTZGOVITZ.

Lofty pine of Herzgovitz, rooted in the riven stone,
'Neath thy shade a maiden sits, on the wild rock all
alone ;
Softly to herself she singeth, and her accents blend with
thine,
What the burden that she bringeth, to thy songs oh
dreamy pine ?

Mourns she that her youth is over, soon its bloom the
sunbeam draws ;
Mourns she for an absent lover, captive in the Turkish
wars ;

Of thy rout, oh red Kossova, sings she, and the olden day,
Or the dreary swamps¹ that cover Stephen and his lost
array?

Sombre are the forest shadows streaked with light that
round her move,
Floating o'er the narrow meadows far beneath, where
white herds rove,
As the wind, the shade, the sunset, wild and sombre thus
should be
Songs of love or battle's onset, 'neath thy boughs, oh
whispering tree.

¹ Of Mohacs.

TO A COCK OF THE WOODS, IN A POUL-
TERER'S SHOP, LONDON.

WHILE thou didst speed, oh bird, over Norwegian walds,
And thy shrill crow was heard, where the Runemen, and
the Skalds,
Their mystic signs have hidden in the shade of birch and
pine ;
Hence was thy far fate bidden, that an Alderman might
dine.

Oh luxury ! thy hunger o'erleaps the northern waves ;
Not famine's prayer is stronger for the crust that misery
craves ;
As the mist flits o'er the forest, and down the deepest
dell,
Wild bird, where'er thou soarest, thou art followed by
her spell.

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